

## Between Form and Function: Translating the Rhetorical Meanings of Selected Quranic Imperatives into Malay

Antara Bentuk dan Fungsi: Penterjemahan Makna Retorik Ayat Perintah Terpilih dalam al-Quran ke Bahasa Melayu

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### ABSTRACT

*Translating Quranic imperative verses presents significant linguistic challenges, particularly when grammatical forms diverge from their intended rhetorical meanings. Literal translations risk distorting divine messages by failing to capture nuances such as al-Ibahah (permission) or al-Ihtiqar (disdain). This study analyses the translation procedures and methods employed to address these rhetorical complexities in Malay translations, with specific reference to Terjemahan Makna al-Quran al-Karim ke Bahasa Melayu (2021). Adopting a qualitative approach through document analysis, sixteen imperative verses representing distinct rhetorical types were examined. The analysis integrates Newmark's (1988) translation methods with the procedures proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and Veisbergs (1997). The findings indicate a strong preference for source-text-oriented strategies, with the semantic method applied in eleven of the verses analysed. Explication emerges as the dominant procedure, primarily through parenthetical additions, to clarify implicit rhetorical meanings. This approach suggests that translators prioritise semantic fidelity and interpretive accuracy over structural equivalence, in line with Islamic scholarly consensus on preserving the integrity of divine meaning for Malay readers.*

*Keywords: Imperative verses; Quran translation; rhetorical messages; translation procedures*

### ABSTRAK

*Menterjemah ayat-ayat perintah (imperatif) al-Quran menimbulkan cabaran linguistik yang ketara, terutamanya apabila bentuk tatabahasa bercanggah dengan makna retorikal yang dimaksudkan. Terjemahan secara harfiah sering berisiko memesongkan mesej ketuhanan akibat kegagalan menangkap nuansa seperti al-Ibahah (izin) atau al-Ihtiqar (penghinaan). Kajian ini menganalisis prosedur dan kaedah terjemahan yang digunakan bagi menangani kerumitan retorikal ini dalam terjemahan Bahasa Melayu, dengan meneliti secara khusus Terjemahan Makna al-Quran al-Karim ke Bahasa Melayu (2021). Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui analisis dokumen, enam belas ayat perintah yang mewakili jenis retorikal berbeza telah diteliti. Analisis ini mengintegrasikan kaedah terjemahan Newmark (1988) bersama prosedur terjemahan Vinay dan Darbelnet (1995) serta Veisbergs (1997). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan kecenderungan yang kuat terhadap strategi berorientasikan teks sumber, di mana kaedah Semantik diaplikasikan pada*

11 ayat. Eksplisitasi dikenal pasti sebagai prosedur yang dominan, terutamanya melalui penambahan maklumat dalam tanda kurung, bagi memperjelas makna retorikal yang tersirat. Pendekatan ini menunjukkan bahawa penterjemah mengutamakan kesetiaan semantik dan ketepatan interpretatif berbanding kesetaraan struktur; selari dengan konsensus sarjana Islam mengenai pemeliharaan makna ilahi demi kefahaman pembaca Melayu.

*Kata kunci:* Ayat imperatif; mesej retorik; prosedur terjemahan; terjemahan al-Quran

## INTRODUCTION

Beyond its elevated status in Islam, the Quran, with its distinctive and unparalleled linguistic and literary features, has long attracted the attention of scholars and researchers across a wide range of disciplines worldwide. These experts undertake in-depth studies of this primary reference text of Islam, aiming to discover insights and contribute to their respective fields of knowledge. From a linguistic perspective, the Quran has been analyzed at various levels, including phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse, and many other branches of applied linguistics, which are inherently broad and complex.

Similarly, the Quran has garnered significant attention from scholars in the field of translation studies, encompassing both Arab and non-Arab, Muslim and non-Muslim researchers. The diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural makeup of the global Muslim community underscores the undeniable necessity of translating the Quran into languages other than Arabic. In light of this reality and upon examining the history of Quranic translation, it is evident that substantial efforts have been dedicated to this endeavor for an extended period.

Regarding the theoretical frameworks available for such endeavors, translation theories are broadly divided into two major categories: direct and indirect translation (Muhammad Firdaus et al. 2017). Indirect theories comprising communicative, dynamic, free, and idiomatic approaches remain faithful to the target language, though the suitability of any framework ultimately depends on the text's context and whether the focus lies on the source or target language. For instance, highlighting a context-driven methodology, Waqar Husain (2022) analyzed Quranic terms including 'nafs', 'rooh', 'aql', 'qalb', and 'foaad' to retrieve meanings compatible with modern Psychology. This study employed a five-step process: enlisting verses, correlating terms with adjacent verbs or nouns to establish context, analyzing root words for nuance, identifying contextual psychological themes, and combining these themes to determine the feasible meaning of each term. Despite such specific methodologies, the

translation of the Quran generally employs the literal translation procedure (Ahmad Nazuki, Azman & Nur Hafizah 2019; Bahrum & Haziyah 2014; Mohd Shukri 2003) because translators must consider the religious motive of preserving, as much as possible, the structure and meaning of each word translated from the Quran. Practically, the translation of the Quran, which falls under the category of religious translation, is not as straightforward as other academic disciplines. Translating sacred texts like the Quran requires specialists with exceptional expertise in the Arabic language and the target language, encompassing all aspects of linguistic proficiency. Furthermore, it necessitates a deep understanding of Quranic exegesis (*tafsir*) and its sciences, as well as other qualifications outlined by esteemed Islamic scholars. This is essential to ensure that the translator comprehends the Quranic text accurately and profoundly before conveying its meanings and messages authentically in the target language (Manna' al-Qattan 2016).

Given the demographics and geographic distribution of Muslims, most adherents of Islam are non-Arabic speakers. Consequently, the content and messages of the Quran are accessed through its translations into the native languages of Muslim communities. Therefore, the transfer of meaning and delivery of the Quranic message heavily relies on the quality and authenticity of its translation. Users of translated Qurans often rely entirely on these translations and, in some cases, regard them as equivalent to the Quran itself (Azman Ariffin & Idris Mansor 2020).

However, scholars specializing in Quranic translation frequently highlight issues such as discrepancies in quality, mistranslations, ambiguities in meaning, manipulations, and distortions of the intended message (Ahmad al-'Abbasi 2006; Ali et al. 2012). Akmal Khuzairi (2004) further argues that translation cannot guarantee the flawless transfer of meaning due to inherent challenges in the translation process and the complex nature of meaning itself.

Although previous translators have made every effort to accurately convey the true meaning of each element within the Quranic text, researchers have identified several notable shortcomings in their

translations. Imperative sentences, which represent one of the forms of *al-uslub al-inshaiyy* (non-declarative sentences) according to the discipline of *al-Balaghah al-Arabiyyah* (Arabic rhetoric), have garnered greater attention from scholars of the Arabic language than those of the Malay language.

In Arabic, imperative verses in terms of their meaning or message are divided into two categories: literal and figurative (metaphorical). For figurative meanings, scholars differ in determining the number of figurative meanings found in the Arabic language. Nor Hashimah (1992) referred to these figurative meanings, based on modern linguistic studies, as implicature, which is the implied message conveyed by a speaker in their utterance (Fauzi et al. 2021). Implicature is one of the most important aspects of pragmatics, the field that studies the relationship between sentences and their context (Carston 1998).

Several Arabic rhetorical scholars have classified figurative meanings of imperative sentences differently: al-Qazwini (2003) identified 10 types; Fadl Hasan Abbas (1997) identified 13; al-Hashimy (1999) identified 18; Ahmad Matlub (1983) identified 31. Meanwhile, al-Amidi (2003), a prominent scholar of *Usul al-Fiqh*, identified 16 types of figurative meanings of imperative verses in the Quran. According to Fadl Hasan Abbas (1997), some of these figurative meanings overlap because their meanings are nearly identical, such as *wajib* (obligatory) and *fardhu* (compulsory), which has been a point of scholarly debate (Fauzi et al. 2021).

Despite extensive research on the linguistic, rhetorical, and translational aspects of the Quran, there remains a notable lack of detailed studies focusing specifically on the rhetorical dimensions of imperative sentences in Quranic translation into Malay. While Arabic rhetorical scholarship has produced extensive classifications and analyses of figurative meanings in imperative sentences, equivalent studies in the Malay translation context are scarce.

This gap is significant because figurative imperative sentences often carry rhetorical messages that go beyond their literal imperative form, and failing to convey these nuances accurately may affect the comprehension of the intended message among Malay-speaking readers. Therefore, this study represents a modest attempt to address this gap by examining selected samples of imperative Quranic verses containing rhetorical messages, analyzing how these are rendered into Malay, and identifying the challenges faced by translators in preserving their rhetorical force.

## METHODOLOGY

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND JUSTIFICATION

This study adopts an eclectic theoretical framework integrating Newmark's (1988) translation methods, Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) and Veisbergs' (1997) procedures. The selection of these theories is justified by the specific multi-layered challenges of translating Quranic imperative verses: -

#### Macro-Level Strategy (Newmark 1988)

Newmark's distinction between Semantic and Communicative translation is essential for analyzing the translator's overall orientation whether they prioritize the sanctity of the source text's form or the accessibility of the meaning to the target audience. In the context of the Quran, this theory provides the parameters to evaluate how the translator navigates the tension between divine preservation and human comprehension. Newmark's theory is also found to clearly distinguish between methods and procedures. Idris (2014) stated that Newmark explicitly differentiates between 'methods' and 'procedures'; 'procedures' refer to translation approaches involving smaller units such as sentences and words, while 'methods' encompass the entire translated text. In other words, 'methods' refer to the strategies applied in the process of translating the whole text (Rochayah Machali 2009). Peter Newmark (1988) proposed eight translation methods as a continuum between emphasis on the source language and emphasis on the target language. These eight translation methods are categorized into two approaches: the semantic approach and the communicative approach. Semantic translation aligns with the idea that translation should convey the same meaning as the original text and remain faithful to the source text. This is done to ensure that the effect of the source text remains intact. Semantic translation strives to present, as far as permitted by the semantic structure and grammar of the second language, the precise contextual meaning of the original text (Newmark 1988). In this context, the translator does not adapt the original text's message to the target language culture; instead, the original form of the source text is preserved, even if the resulting translation may sometimes be vague and difficult to understand (Muhammad Fauzi Jumangan 2006).

MICRO-LEVEL STRUCTURAL SHIFTS (VINAY & DARBELNET 1995)

Given the distinct syntactic distance between Arabic and Malay, translating imperative verbs (*fi'il amr*) often necessitates grammatical restructuring. Vinay and Darbelnet provide the necessary linguistic toolkit (e.g., *transposition* and *modulation*) to describe how Arabic rhetorical commands are naturalized into Malay syntax.

EXPLICATION OF RHETORICAL MEANING (VEISBERGS 1997)

Quranic rhetorical imperatives often carry implicit meanings (implicatures) such as sarcasm (*al-Ihtiqar*)

or permission (*al-Ibahah*) that are not visible in literal translation. Veisbergs' concept of 'Addition' justifies the analysis of explication strategies (e.g., interpolation in parentheses), which are crucial for making these hidden rhetorical intentions visible to the reader.

PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

This study applied the study applied Newmark's translation method theories (1981 and 1988) and translation procedures by Vinay and Darbelnet (1958 & 1995) and Veisbergs (1997) in analyzing the research sample. Figure 1 outlines the procedural framework implemented in this study. The procedure consists of seven translational processes.

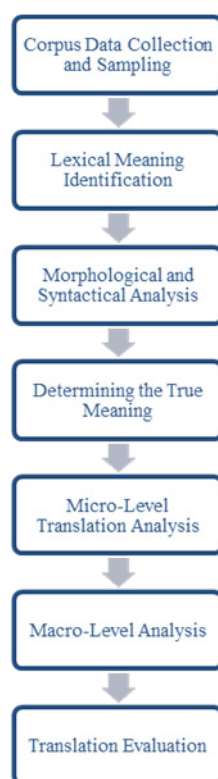


FIGURE 1. Procedural framework corpus data collection and sampling

The corpus data is collected and selected through purposive sampling, where the study sample is chosen based on specific characteristics aligned with the study's objectives (Ahmad Sunawari Long 2016). The corpus data was collected through purposive sampling to identify imperative verses containing specific rhetorical nuances. A comprehensive review of the Quranic text was conducted, and sixteen (16) verses were selected, each representing a distinct rhetorical message type (*al-aghrad al-balaghy*) as categorized by Arabic rhetoricians (Fadl 1997). These verses, along with

their Malay translations from *Terjemahan Makna al-Quran al-Karim ke Bahasa Melayu* (King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex 2021), constitute the primary dataset.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Lexical, Morphological and Syntactical Verification

Before the translation analysis was conducted, the source text was first examined to establish the baseline meaning through lexical and syntactical

verification, whereby lexical meaning was determined with reference to *Al-Miftah: Kamus Moden Arab–Melayu–Inggeris* (2010) and *Kamus DBP Online*, while grammatical structure was analyzed using *Tatabahasa Dewan Edisi Ketiga* (2015) for Malay syntax and *al-'Irab al-Mufassal* (Soleh 1997) for Arabic syntax in order to identify morphological equivalences between the two languages.

#### Determination of Rhetorical Meaning (Pragmatic Analysis)

To ascertain the true intended meaning of the imperative verses (beyond their literal command form), the study referred to authoritative Islamic jurisprudence (*Usul al-Fiqh*) and exegetical texts. Specifically, Al-Zarkashiy's *Al-Bahr al-Muhit Fi Usul al-Fiqh* (2000) and *Tafsir al-Quran al-Azim* by Ibn Kathir (2000) serve as benchmarks for determining the correct rhetorical implication.

#### Micro-Level Translation Analysis

The study examines the translation procedures employed in rendering the imperative phrases into the target language. For this process, the study adopts the theory introduced by Western scholars Vinay & Darbelnet in their book *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation* (1995). The ten (10) translation procedures they proposed are borrowing, calque, literal translation, transposition, modulation, equivalence, adaptation, addition, amplification, and omission.

#### Macro-Level Analysis

At the macro level, the study analyzes how the imperative verses are translated into Malay while retaining their rhetorical message. Newmark's translation methods (1981 and 1988) are employed to assess the translation approach for the sixteen (16) rhetorical imperative verses from Arabic, the source language of the sacred text, into Malay. Newmark's proposed methods include word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, communicative translation, idiomatic translation, free translation, and adaptation. To determine the translation method for each imperative verse, the researcher examines the definitions of each method outlined by Newmark, tabulates the key features of each method, and uses symbols (+/-) to indicate the presence or absence of specific features. A comparison of features between the Malay translated text and the original Arabic text

is made to assess the degree of alignment with the characteristics of a particular translation method. This process enables the researcher to determine the type of translation method applied by the translator.

#### Evaluation of Translation Accuracy and Appropriateness

Finally, the quality and appropriateness of the translations were evaluated not based on subjective preference, but on the principle of faithfulness (Abdelaal 2019), rooted in two primary criteria. First, the evaluation focuses on alignment with *Tafsir* (Exegesis) (Saleh Shan et al. 2025), where the consensus of *mufassirin* serves as the benchmark; translations that successfully convey the rhetorical nuance (such as *Disdain*) as elucidated in authoritative sources like *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* are deemed appropriate and of high quality. Conversely, the second criterion assesses the clarity of implicature, whereby a translation of the Qur'an that fails to preserve rhetorical function and semantic impact is inadequate and risks distorting the understanding of the Qur'an (Ghazi Dalila 2023). For translations deemed less appropriate, the study proposes alternative translations. These alternatives are constructed by applying Newmark's *Communicative Translation* method and Veisberg's *explicitation* strategy to ensure the rhetorical meaning identified in the *Tafsir* is clearly conveyed to the target audience.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### GENERAL LINGUISTIC OBSERVATIONS IN TRANSLATING IMPERATIVES

Across the selected samples, distinct syntactic patterns emerged. In Malay, the second-person subject (e.g., *kamu*, *awak*) is frequently omitted in imperative structures. Additionally, the particle *-lah* is consistently suffixed to the imperative verb to soften the command while emphasizing the predicate. Consequently, the analysis below focuses specifically on the *rhetorical* transfer and semantic accuracy of each verse, rather than revisiting these standard grammatical features.

As the sample for analysis, the study selected sixteen (16) imperative verses from the Quran, encompassing all sixteen (16) rhetorical messages. In conducting this analysis, the study first examined the definitions of each translation method outlined by Newmark (1981 and 1988) and then listed the key features of each method. Subsequently, the study compared the characteristics of the translated

text samples with the main features of each method. Through this comparison, the study was able to determine the type of translation method employed by the translator. The study used the symbol (+) to indicate the complete presence of a feature, the symbol (-) to signify the complete absence of a feature, and the symbol (+/-) to denote the partial

presence of a feature. In this paper, the study presented only five (5) sample analyses out of all sixteen (16) imperative verses.

AN IMPERATIVE SENTENCE WITH A RHETORICAL MESSAGE OF AL-IBAHAH (PERMISSIBILITY) [SURAH AL-BAQARAH, VERSE 187]

TABLE 1. Translation text of surah al-Baqarah, Verse 187

Source Text	Translation Text
وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَبَيِّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ۗ	“Dan makanlah serta minumlah sehingga nyata kepada kamu benang putih ( <i>cahaya siang</i> ) daripada benang hitam ( <i>kegelapan malam</i> ), iaitu waktu fajar.”

In this sample verse, there are two imperative verbs, namely (وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا). The verb (أكل) according to Kamus Al-Miftah (2010) means *makan* and (شرب) means *minum*. These two imperative verbs do not imply a command or order that must be followed, even though the original meaning of an imperative utterance is obligatory (Fadl 1992). Instead, they signify *al-Ibahah* (permissibility), meaning an instruction to perform something in the form of granting permission (Ahmad 1983). The shift from command to *al-Ibahah* aligns with studies showing that Qur’anic imperatives are highly context-dependent and often serve functions beyond ordering (Hassoub 2022 & Nurtaqwa 2017). These two words (أكل) and (شرب) convey a rhetorical message, namely that Allah allows those who wish to fast the following day to eat and drink during the night until the time of dawn (Ibn Kathir 2000).

The syntactic structure of the original text for (وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا) is successfully transferred while maintaining almost the same syntactic structure in the translation, “Dan makanlah serta minumlah..”. The subject in the Malay imperative sentence, which is a second-person pronoun like *awak*, *kamu*, and *engkau*, is usually omitted (Nik Safiah et al. 2015).

According to Nik Safiah et al. (2015), the particle *lah* placed after the imperative verb serves to soften the utterance while emphasizing the predicate.

The translation of this verse also successfully conveys the contextual meaning of the source text. The translator has translated every element found

in the source text, in addition to providing further explanation for the phrases *benang putih* and *benang hitam*. This procedure is known as explicitation in the form of additional information in parentheses (Vinay and Darbelnet 1995). With this added information, the translation of this verse is considered an over-translation. Current scholarship strongly supports this approach. There are several studies that examine pragmatic explicitation (Saldanha 2008; Becher 2010; Adil Abdulwahab 2012). Adil Abdulwahab (2012) emphasizes the necessity of pragmatic explicitation in the translation process. Without the parenthetical explanation (*cahaya siang*) and (*kegelapan malam*), a lay reader might interpret the verse literally, leading to theological confusion.

In conclusion, all three important characteristics of the semantic translation method represented by [+ contextual meaning accuracy (i.e., rhetorical message), + syntactic structure limitation, + over-translation] are found in the translation of this sample Quranic verse.

Therefore, according to the researcher, the provided translation of this verse is good and suitable to be maintained due to its ability to convey the rhetorical message of *al-Ibahah* intended by the utterance of this holy verse.

AN IMPERATIVE SENTENCE WITH A RHETORICAL MESSAGE OF AL-IHTIQAR (DISDAIN) [SURAH YUNUS, VERSE 80]

TABLE 2. Translation text of surah Yunus, Verse 80

Source Text	Translation Text
فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُم مُّوسَىٰ أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُّلقُونَ	“Setelah ahli-ahli sihir itu tiba, Musa berkata kepada mereka: “Campakkanlah dahulu apa yang kamu hendak campakkan.”

In this second sample verse, the imperative verb is (الْفُؤَا). The root verb is (الْفَى), which means *melemparkan* atau *melontarkan* (Kamus Al-Miftah 2010). This imperative verb does not convey a command or order that must be followed, even though the original meaning of an imperative utterance is usually obligatory (Fadl 1992). Instead, it means *al-Ihtiqar* (to belittle), which refers to an imperative that aims to show contempt and degrade the second party (Ahmad 1983). This verb carries a rhetorical or metaphorical message, meaning that although the magic presented by Pharaoh's magicians seemed impressive, when compared to the miracle presented by Musa A.S. in front of the audience at that time, it was far more powerful and realistic. The imperative verb (الْفُؤَا) is a form of belittling the greatness of that magic (al-Zarkasyi 2000).

The syntactic structure of the source text (فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُم مُوسَى أَلْقُوا..) was successfully transferred, maintaining almost the same syntactic structure in the translation (*Setelah ahli-ahli sihir itu tiba, Musa berkata kepada mereka: "Campakkanlah..*). The verb *campakkan-lah* is derived from the root word *campak* (to throw), with the particle *kan* added to give a causative meaning. The subject in the Malay imperative sentence, which is the second-person pronoun such as *awak*, *kamu*, or *engkau*, is usually omitted (Nik Safiah et

al. 2015). According to Nik Safiah et al. (2015), the particle 'lah' placed after the imperative verb functions to soften the utterance while emphasizing the predicate.

The translated text of this verse also successfully conveys the contextual meaning of the source text. The translator has translated each element in the source text while applying the addition procedure (Veisbergs 1997), as seen when the verb (الْفُؤَا), meaning *campakkanlah*, is supplemented with the word *dahulu* (first) to provide a clearer understanding to the reader. With this addition, the translated text of this verse is somewhat more elaborate, which is a characteristic of the semantic translation method.

In conclusion, all three key features of the semantic translation method represented by [+ contextual meaning accuracy (i.e., rhetorical message), +/- syntactic structure limitations, + excessive translation] are found in the translated text of this Quranic verse sample 2. Therefore, according to the study, the translation provided for this verse is good and suitable to be retained due to its ability to convey the rhetorical message of *al-Ihtiqar* intended by this sacred utterance.

AN IMPERATIVE SENTENCE WITH A  
RHETORICAL MESSAGE OF AL-IRSYAD  
(GUIDANCE) [SURAH AL-BAQARAH, VERSE 282]

TABLE 3. Translation text of surah al-Baqarah, Verse 282

Source Text	Translation Text
وَأَشْهَدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ	"Dan adakanlah persaksian apabila kamu berjual-beli."

In this third sample verse, the imperative verb is (أَشْهَدُوا). The verb (شهد) according to the *Al-Miftah: Kamus Moden Arab-Melayu-Inggeris* (4th edition 2010) means *menyaksikan*, *mengesahkan* (to witness, to affirm). This imperative verb does not imply a command or an order that must be executed, even though the original meaning of an imperative utterance is generally obligatory (Fadl 1992). Instead, it means *al-Irsyad* (guidance), which refers to an instruction intended to provide guidance or advice on acting in the best possible way, as in verse 282 of Surah al-Baqarah, which addresses the procedure for transactions in Islam. The instruction *adakanlah* (establish) is meant to guide or advise the parties to provide witnesses in a transaction so that the interests of both parties are safeguarded in the future. Furthermore, the instruction *adakanlah* is clearly not a literal imperative, as the presence

of witnesses is not a condition for the validity of a transaction (Ibn Kathir 2000). Shan, Fareh, & Benmessaoud (2025) emphasizes the importance of consulting exegesis books to ensure translations align with scholarly interpretations.

The syntactic structure of the original text (وَأَشْهَدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ) has been successfully transferred, maintaining almost the same syntactic structure in the translation, "Dan adakanlah persaksian apabila kamu berjual-beli". The verb *adakanlah* is derived from the root word *ada*, which is then added with the particle *kan* to convert the intransitive verb into a transitive one. In Malay imperative sentences, the second-person pronoun such as *awak*, *kamu*, or *engkau* is usually omitted (Nik Safiah et al. 2015). According to Nik Safiah et al. (2015), the particle *lah* placed after the imperative verb serves to soften the expression while emphasizing the predicate.

The translation of this verse also effectively conveys the contextual meaning of the source text. The translator has rendered each element of the text without adding extra words or phrases. With the absence of any additional information, this translation does not appear to be over-translated.

In conclusion, both key features of the faithful translation method represented by [+ contextual meaning accuracy (i.e., rhetorical message), and + syntactic structure limitation] are found in the

translation of this Quranic verse. Therefore, the study concludes that the translation provided for this verse is good and appropriate to be maintained, as it successfully conveys the rhetorical message of *al-Irsyad* intended by the utterance of this holy verse.

AN IMPERATIVE SENTENCE WITH A RHETORICAL MESSAGE OF AL-I'TIBAR (TAKING LESSONS), [SURAH AL-AN'AM, VERSE 99]

TABLE 4. Translation text of surah al-An'am, Verse 99

Source Text	Translation Text
<p>وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرَجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا كَثِيرًا كَثِيرًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِن طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ۗ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ</p>	<p>“Dan Dialah yang menurunkan hujan dari langit lalu Kami tumbuhkan dengan air hujan itu semua jenis tumbuh-tumbuhan, kemudian Kami keluarkan daripadanya tanaman yang menghijau, Kami keluarkan daripada tanaman yang menghijau itu bijian yang banyak, daripada mayang kurma, mengurai tangkai-tangkai yang menjuntai dan kebun anggur, zaitun serta buah delima yang serupa dan yang tidak serupa. Perhatikanlah kamu kepada buahnya apabila ia berbuah dan ketika ia masak. Sesungguhnya pada yang demikian itu ada tanda-tanda kekuasaan Allah bagi orang yang beriman”.</p>

In this sample verse, the imperative verb is (انظُرُوا). The root verb is (نظر), which means *melihat*, *merenung* (to look, to gaze) (Kamus Al-Miftah 2010). This imperative verb does not indicate an order or command that must be followed, even though the original meaning of an imperative utterance is generally obligatory (Fadl 1992). Instead, it means *al-I'tibar* (taking lessons), which is an imperative word aimed at requesting someone to take a lesson. In this verse, the word *perhatikanlah* (look) is an imperative that carries a connotation of teaching; urging careful observation of fruits at the moment they first appear and when they reach full ripeness. This signifies an invitation to contemplate the power of the Creator, who brings these fruits into existence from dry wood, then causes them to become grapes and dates, as well as other creations that vary in color, form, taste, and fragrance. All of this constitutes clear signs of Allah's absolute power and the magnificence of His creation for those who reflect and take heed (Ibnu Kathir 2000).

The syntactic structure of the source text (انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ..) is successfully transferred while maintaining a similar syntactic structure in the translated text “*Perhatikanlah kamu kepada buahnya apabila ia berbuah dan ketika ia masak..*”. The verb *Perhatikanlah* is formed from the root word *perhati* with the addition of the suffix *kan*. The grammatically correct phrase is *perhatilah*, which does not include the *kan* suffix because the

verb *perhati* is transitive and no longer requires the additional suffix. In Malay imperative sentences, the second-person pronouns like *awak*, *kamu*, and *engkau* are often omitted, but in this sample, it is included for emphasis (Nik Safiah et al. 2015).

According to Nik Safiah et al. (2015), the particle *lah* placed after the imperative verb functions to soften the utterance while emphasizing the predicate.

The translated text for this verse also successfully conveys the contextual meaning of the source text. The translator has translated every element found in the source text, and the procedure of addition (Veisbergs 1997) is applied, as seen when the verb (وَيَنْعِهِ), which originally means “*dan ia masak*”, is supplemented with the word *ketika* (when), to provide a clearer understanding for the reader. With this addition, the translation of the verse is slightly excessive, which is one of the features of the semantic translation method.

In conclusion, the three key characteristics of the semantic translation method represented by [+ contextual meaning accuracy (i.e., rhetorical message), + syntactic structure limitation, + excessive translation] are found in the translated text of this sample Quranic verse. According to the study, the translation provided for this verse is good and suitable for retention as it successfully conveys the rhetorical message of *al-Iktibar* intended by the sacred utterance.

## AN IMPERATIVE VERSE WITH A RHETORICAL MESSAGE OF AL-IKRAM (RESPECT), [SURAH AL-HIJR, VERSE 46]

TABLE 5. Translation text of surah al-Hijr, Verse 46

Source Text	Translation Text
ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ أَمِينٍ	(Mereka dipersilakan oleh malaikat dengan berkata): “Masuklah kamu ke dalamnya dengan selamat sejahtera serta beroleh keamanan.”

In this fifth sample verse, the imperative verb is (ادْخُلُوهَا). The root verb is (دخل) which means ‘to enter’ (Kamus Al-Miftah 2010). This imperative verb does not imply a command or order that must be executed, even though the original meaning of an imperative utterance is generally obligatory (Fadl 1992). Instead, it signifies *al-Ikram* (Respect/Honour), which is an imperative directed to show a sign of respect, as seen in this verse from Surah al-Hijr. The word “*masuklah*” (enter) is an imperative with the intent of honoring the pious, where Allah invites them to enter Paradise in peace and safety.

The syntactic structure of the source text (ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ أَمِينٍ) was found to be successfully transferred while maintaining a nearly identical syntactic structure in the translated text (“(Mereka dipersilakan oleh malaikat dengan berkata): “Masuklah kamu ke dalamnya dengan selamat sejahtera serta beroleh keamanan”). The verb *Masuklah* is formed from the root word *masuk* (enter) with the addition of the particle ‘*lah*’. According to Nik Safiah et al. (2015) the particle ‘*lah*’ placed after the imperative verb serves to soften the imperative utterance while emphasizing the predicate. The subject in Malay imperative sentences, which is a second-person pronoun such as *awak*, *kamu*, or *engkau*, is usually omitted; however, in this sample, it is explicitly stated for the purpose of emphasis (Nik Safiah et al. 2015).

The translated text for this verse was also found to successfully convey the contextual meaning of the source text. The translator rendered every

element found in the source text while applying the addition procedure (Veisbergs 1997). This is observed where the phrase (بِسَلَامٍ أَمِينٍ), originally in the form of (preposition + singular noun + adverb/state), was changed to (*dengan selamat sejahtera serta beroleh keamanan*) which takes the form of (preposition + compound word + conjunction + verb phrase + object). This procedure is known as transposition (Vinay & Darbelnet 1958 & 1995). Furthermore, the translator added information in parentheses (Veisbergs 1997) at the beginning of the sentence: “*Mereka dipersilakan oleh malaikat dengan berkata*” (They are invited by the angels saying).

Therefore, with this added explanation, the translation of this verse is considered over-translated, which is one of the features of the Semantic Translation method.

In conclusion, all three key characteristics of the semantic translation method represented by [+ contextual meaning accuracy (i.e., rhetorical message), + syntactic structure limitation, + over-translation] are found in the translated text of this Quranic verse sample. According to the study, the provided translation for this verse is good and suitable to be retained due to its ability to convey the rhetorical message of *al-Ikram* intended by this sacred utterance.

Table below summarizes the translation procedures and methods of the rhetorical messages found in the Quran.

TABLE 5. Summary of translational procedure and methods of the rhetorical message from the Quranic verses

No.	Rhetorical Message	Surah & Verse	Translation Procedure	Translation Method
1.	<i>al-Ibahah</i> (Permissibility)	[Surah al-Baqarah 2: 187]	Additional Explanation (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
2.	<i>al-Ihtiqar</i> (Disdain)	[Surah Yunus 10: 80]	Addition (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
3.	<i>al-Irsyad</i> (Guidance)	[Surah al-Baqarah 2: 282]	-	Faithful
4.	<i>al-I'tibar</i> (Taking Lessons)	[Surah al-An'am 6: 99]	Addition (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
5.	<i>al-Ikram</i> (Respect)	[Surah al-Hijr 15: 46]	Transposition (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995) & Additional Explanation (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
6.	<i>al-Imtinan</i> (Gratitude)	[Surah al-An'am 6: 141]	Addition (Veisbergs, 1997) & Additional Explanation (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
7.	<i>al-Inzar</i> (Warning)	[Surah Ibrahim 14: 30]	Additional Explanation (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
8.	<i>al-Ihanah</i> (Humiliation)	[Surah al-Dukhan 44: 49]	Additional Explanation (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
9.	<i>Al-Taskhir</i> (Mockery)	[Surah al-Baqarah 2: 65]	-	Faithful
10.	<i>al-Taswiyah</i> (Equalization)	[Surah al-Tur 52: 16]	Transposition (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995) & Addition (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
11.	<i>al-Ta'jiz</i> (Weakening)	[Surah al-Baqarah 2: 23]	Addition (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
12.	<i>al-Takzib</i> (Falsehood Exposure)	[Surah Ali-Imran 3: 93]	Additional Explanation (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
13.	<i>al-Tamanniy</i> (Wishful Thinking)	[Surah al-Sajdah 32: 12]	Addition (Veisbergs, 1997)	Semantic
14.	<i>al-Tahdid</i> (Threat)	[Surah al-Fussilat 41: 40]	-	Faithful
15.	<i>al-Du'a</i> (Prayer)	[Surah al-Baqarah 2: 201]	Transposition (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995)	Faithful
16.	<i>al-Taslim</i> (Submission Command)	[Surah Taha 20: 72]	-	Faithful

This study found that out of 16 Quranic verses representing various types of rhetorical messages in the imperative form, 11 were translated using the semantic method, while 5 employed the faithful method. Both methods fall under the category that emphasises the source language, aiming to preserve the meaning, elements, and cultural aspects embedded in the original text. The semantic method is source-text oriented, seeking to convey the contextual meaning of the original as accurately as

possible, while providing additional explanations to aid comprehension among target language readers.

The analysis also shows that the most dominant translation procedure is explicitation, particularly through the addition of information either directly in the text or within parentheses, to clarify the implicit meaning of rhetorical imperative verses. The study found that while the Semantic Translation Method often led to higher accuracy scores, direct translation strategies might have sometimes faced challenges

due to linguistic and structural differences between Arabic and Malay, emphasizing the importance of alternating between the various translation approaches for more accurate renderings.

Furthermore, this study has offered valuable insights by illustrating various translation strategies for rendering imperative structures from Arabic to Malay. It identified the most effective procedures for translating such Additional Explanation and Transposition, ultimately enhancing the understanding of the Quranic imperative utterances and preserving its rhetorical force at the same time. The analysis of these translation techniques enriched the existing scholarly knowledge regarding the cross-cultural translation of imperative structures, thus advancing ongoing discussions concerning Quranic discourse translation.

Based on these findings, the study suggests that consulting exegesis books and references is crucial to grasp the gist of each verse and its imperative style before translating it. No matter the translation strategy employed, the results varied according to the level of accuracy in rendering the imperative utterances present in the original Quranic text.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the translation of rhetorical imperative verses in the Quran tends to adopt a semantic or interpretative translation approach, which involves translation with explanation. This approach is considered safer, according to the views of many Islamic scholars, as it helps preserve the understanding of the target language readers while providing clarification of the true meaning of the Quran. Overall, the semantic approach, when supplemented with additional explanations, proves not only to safeguard the original meaning of the Quranic text but also to align with scholarly consensus on the importance of preserving meaning accuracy thereby enhancing comprehension among target language readers.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings contribute to the field of religious translation studies by providing empirical evidence that semantic and faithful methods can be effectively applied to maintain fidelity to the meaning of the Quranic text without neglecting the need for explanatory support for non-Arabic readers. Practically, these results can serve as a guide for Malay-language

Quran translators to preserve rhetorical force while ensuring that messages are delivered clearly and accurately.

While this study provides significant insights into the translation of rhetorical imperatives, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the scope of this research is confined to sixteen (16) selected verses, each representing a specific rhetorical type (*al-gharad al-balaghy*). Consequently, the findings regarding the dominance of the Semantic Translation Method may not be generalizable to the entire corpus of Quranic imperative verses. Secondly, this study focuses exclusively on one Malay translation version, the *Terjemahan Makna al-Quran al-Karim ke Bahasa Melayu* (King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex). It does not compare how other authoritative Malay translations, such as *Tafsir Pimpinan Ar-Rahman*; the work of Abdullah Basmeih, handle these rhetorical nuances. Thirdly, the analysis is limited to the imperative form (*fi'il amr*), excluding other grammatical forms that may function as commands, such as prohibitions (*al-nahy*) or interrogatives (*al-istifham*) with imperative force.

Future research could address these limitations by conducting a comparative analysis across multiple Malay Quran translations to identify variations in translating rhetorical styles. Additionally, expanding the corpus to include other rhetorical forms beyond the standard imperative would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how Arabic rhetoric is accommodated in the Malay language. The study also recommends further research on translating imperatives in a different sample from the Quranic discourse.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the conceptualisation, methodology, and analysis. M.A. prepared the first draft, while S.Z.A., and H.Z. handled the restructuring, review and editing. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

The authors confirm that this study adheres to ethical standards, including research integrity and avoidance of plagiarism.

## AI DECLARATION

AI tools were used for proofreading and language enhancement only.

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